

EL MONTE SAND MINE & NATURE PRESERVE

PDS2015-MUP-98-014W2, PDS2015-RP-15-001

NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

August 13, 2015 through September 14, 2015

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING COMMENT SHEET

NOP Scoping Meeting August 26, 2015

Lakeside Community Center

9841 Vine Street

Lakeside, California 92040

WRITTEN COMMENT FORM

Please see attachment

RECEIVED
SEP 11 2015

**Planning and
Development Services**

(Attach additional pages as needed)

Signature

Date

Christy Walter

Print Name

MAIL or E-MAIL COMMENTS TO:

Jim Bennett
County of San Diego
Planning & Development Services
5510 Overland Ave, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123
Phone#: (858) 694-3820
e-mail: jim.bennett@sdcounty.ca.gov

9395 Harritt Rd Spc 61

Address

Lakeside CA 92040

City

State

Zip Code

COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 4:00 PM, SEPTEMBER 14, 2015

El Monte Sand Mine & Nature Preserve

I am an Emergency Medicine physician who has lived in Lakeside since 2008. My husband and I board horses at a facility located off of El Monte Road. We are vehemently opposed to this project for several reasons. As a physician, my primary concern is for the health and well-being of the people and animals that will be adversely affected by the mining. In particular, I am concerned about contracting Valley Fever.

Valley fever, also called coccidioidomycosis, is an infection caused by the fungus *coccidioides*. It is endemic in the soil in the southwestern United States, most notably in California and Arizona. It lies dormant in the soil during dry spells, then develops as a mold with long filaments that break off into airborne spores. Spores can be swept into the air by disruption of the soil as seen during construction, farming, and sand mining. Once inhaled the spores convert to large spherules. As the spherules enlarge and rupture they release thousands of smaller endospores. People infected with the spores typically develop respiratory symptoms that resemble bronchitis or pneumonia including fatigue, fever, cough, headaches, rash, chest pain and muscle and joint pain. It is usually self-remitting, however, chronic and recurrent symptoms are an ever-present threat. Dissemination of the disease can occur via hematogenous spread. Dissemination can be rapid and fatal and can affect virtually any organ system in the body. Individuals with weakened immune systems, advanced age and pregnant women are particularly at risk for serious complications. This disease can also affect other mammals including cats, dogs, horses and cattle.

Coccidioidomycosis exists in the El Monte Valley. I can speak from personal experience. Our Italian greyhound dog, Arlo, contracted the spore while playing in the dirt. He woke up one morning with a mild cough. I brought him to the vet who thought it was probably "kennel cough." An x-ray obtained that morning was normal. By the next day Arlo's lung was whited out. He was deathly ill. He was in the hospital for over a week receiving aggressive treatment. This vet proposed removing his entire lung. We did not want to put him through that so we took him home. He was not expected to live. Fortunately, the vet had placed him on broad spectrum antibiotic and antifungal medication. Ten days after his symptoms developed the titers came back positive for Coccidioidomycosis. Four years later he still has severe coughing spells.

I have to wonder if the company proposing this project is aware or even cares about the threat to public health that excavating the sand will cause. Coccidiomycosis is but one threat. Other threats include West Nile Virus, heavy metal toxicity from contaminated well water, and the like. It would be a travesty for this project to move forward. This is just another example where big business and big money have been placed ahead of the lives of people. Is the mining company prepared to pay for the adverse consequences that are sure to happen?



Dr. Christy Walter